

WCTE Age of Nature Scavenger Hunt and iNaturalist Observation Contest

Important dates:

- August 29: Contest opens
- November 5: Contest submissions due
- November 30: Contest winners announced

Participant Eligibility:

1. Participants must be within the broadcasting area of WCTE. Click here to see a map of the broadcasting area: [WCTE - TV Station Profile](#)
2. Students in elementary/middle school grades 5-8 and high school grades 9-12 are eligible to participate in both the scavenger hunt and/or the iNaturalist observation contest.
3. Students may be enrolled in public, private, or homeschooling programs.
4. In order to participate in the iNaturalist observation contest, a student must first complete the scavenger hunt for their grade level.

Participant requirements:

1. Students must first create an iNaturalist account (in collaboration with a parent). Students should download iNaturalist to an iPhone or Android smartphone, or they may take photos on a regular camera and upload them to their iNaturalist account via www.inaturalist.org directly. Photos taken on a camera and uploaded to Flickr may also be imported into iNaturalist as observations.
 - a. How to make observations on a mobile device: [Adding an Observation on a Mobile Device](#)
 - b. How to make observations via a computer: [Adding an Observation via the Web](#)
2. All observations must be made within the date ranges of August 29 through November 5.
3. Location services (GPS) must be enabled for iPhone, Android, or any camera used for this activity. These data are required to upload information into iNaturalist.
 - a. How to turn on location services for an Apple device: <https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT207092>
 - b. How to turn on location services on an Android device: <https://support.google.com/accounts/answer/3467281?hl=en>

Engagement Activity Details

I. Scavenger hunt instructions:

1. Students must begin with the scavenger hunt activity. To begin, they must create an iNaturalist account if they do not already have one (see step 1 under Participant Requirements, above).
2. Second, they join the iNaturalist project. Here is the project URL:
<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/wcte-age-of-nature>
3. All photos must be of “wild” organisms and not of pets or people. For example, a sparrow in a tree is fine, but not a family dog. The point of the activity is to get students out exploring nature, so aim for natural habitats (roadsides, fields, woods, creeks) instead of manicured gardens or farms with captive livestock.
4. Photos are the main source of observations/documentation. However, sound recordings are also acceptable (e.g., frog calls, bird songs), but must be uploaded via the inaturalist.org website (not via app). Photos must be clear and taken from multiple viewpoints to help with identification.
 - a. How to take photos for identification: [How to Take Identifiable Photos](#)
 - b. How to use the “identify” feature within iNaturalist: [How to Use the Identify Page](#)
 - c. How to use a smartphone to take images through a microscope eyepiece: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cfd9ViHBIR4>
5. Students should try to make an observation in as many categories as they can:
 - a. Observations in grades 5-8 should represent organisms from 8 of the 18 groups listed in Table 1.
 - b. Observations in grades 9-12 should represent organisms from 14 of the 18 groups listed in Table 1.
 - c. Students may submit as many observations as they like but they must be marked as part of this specific project.
6. Use iNaturalist to create a high quality observation for each of these living organisms:

Organism type	Examples and/or places to look
Flowering plants	<i>Iris</i> , Tulip poplar, lily
Cone-bearing plants	Pine tree, bald cypress
Spore bearing vascular plants	Fern, clubmoss, horsetail
Mosses, liverworts	Look for tiny green plants in shaded and wet areas

Red, brown, green algae	Look in waterfalls, stagnant water, or ponds *may require dissecting or compound microscope
Single celled aquatic invertebrates	Amoebae, diatoms, <i>Euglena</i> , <i>Volvox</i> *will require compound microscope
Birds* (here treated separately from the rest of the reptiles)	Crow, wren, heron, mockingbird
Reptiles	Snake, skink, turtle
Mammals	Raccoon, mouse, rabbit
Insects	Beetle, bee, butterfly, moth, dragonfly
Arachnids	Spider, harvestmen, tick, mite, scorpion
Amphibians	Salamander, frog, toad, tadpole
Fungi	Mushroom, shelf fungus
Lichens	Reindeer moss, British soldiers, old man's beard
Crustaceans	Crayfish, crabs, shrimp, barnacles, water fleas, pill bugs
Molluscs	Snail, slug, squid, clam, mussel
Fish	Sunfish, bass, paddlefish, catfish
Bacteria	Blue-green bacteria, look for pond scum *may require compound microscope

Table 1. List of organisms for the scavenger hunt, with examples and suggestions on where to find them.

7. Make sure you are uploading your observations under the WCTE Age of Nature project.
 - a. How to add your observations to a project in iNaturalist:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9dbUugxwqug>
8. Once a student has made the minimum number of observations and submitted them to the iNaturalist project, they should submit their contact information via <https://forms.gle/WwwQggf9b3P2dKqD9> on or before November 5, 2020.
9. Verified submissions will receive an official reward pack with tons of awesome swag, including things like bookmarks, stickers, a hand lens, and even a certificate to a local vendor for a free tasty treat! These packs will be mailed to the student if they have successfully completed the scavenger hunt.

II. iNaturalist Observation Contest

This competition is modeled after the journal portion of the “iNat Observation of the Day.” These observations are chosen by curators at iNaturalist and tell the story of the observation and the people behind the photograph. For inspiration, please click here: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/inat-observation-of-the-day/journal>.

Once a student has completed the scavenger hunt, they may choose to nominate one (1) of their observations for consideration. All students must watch the Age of Nature 3-week series on WCTE.org. Submissions should be made via <https://forms.gle/cCFYer5hEhebt7MS6> (Observation Contest) on or before November 5, 2020. The permalink to the iNaturalist observation to be entered must be submitted via the google form.

A successful submission to the contest will include the following:

1. A caption for the image. When writing, please consider the following in your caption:
 - a. How did you come to make this observation? Tell us the story behind the photo.
 - b. Describe the natural history of the organism - where does it usually live, what habitat does it prefer, how does it reproduce, is it common, rare, etc.
 - c. Did you already notice nature before completing the scavenger hunt? Maybe you were an avid photographer or this was your first time taking photos. What have you learned about the importance and benefits of observing nature through this experience?
 - d. How do you think your experience and/or your iNat observation relate to the PBS “Age of Nature” miniseries episodes you watched?
2. Image caption details are as follows:
 - a. Grades 5-8: Students will write a 300 word (or less) image caption
 - b. Grades 9-12: Students will write a 500 word (or less) image caption
3. A single student may only submit one observation to the contest and may only win in a single category and a single age range.

Prizes:

Grades 5-8 and 9-12 will each have three winners chosen in the categories below:

1. Most beautiful/creative observation (art)
2. Most biologically significant observation (science)
3. Judges’ choice